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# THE NEW PSYCHE;

## A PASTORAL,

BY IRWIN HUNTINGTON.

[FRANCES IRWIN.]

Author of "The Wife of the Sun," Etc.



"All Love is Beauty, and all Beauty—Love!"

—[R. H. Stoddart; "Hymn to the Beautiful."]

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"Beauty's akin to death!"

—[Bailey's "Festus"]

"The Holy Spirit of the Spring

Is working silently."

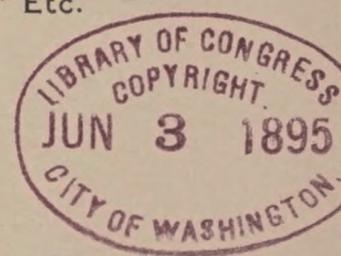
—[George McDonald; "Songs of the Spring Days."]



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TO

MRS. JOSEPH THOMPSON

of Atlanta, Ga.,

President of the Board of Women Managers of the  
Cotton States and International Exposition,  
This book is dedicated

BY ITS AUTHOR,

As slight recognition of a true Southern  
woman's work for women.

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## FOREWORD.

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“The Unknown of today is the Truth of tomorrow.”

Each soul hath its Bethel and, sleeping the sleep of Jacob, doth behold the ladder that spans between High Heaven and *dreams*.

Whoso may deem my Rose idyl vision merely, I thus entreat:—*Let us dream!* And to whomso shall discern Truth’s countenance beyond the mists, I speak thus:—*Let us live!* Both I would remind in the words of Jean Paul:—“There are few souls that know how far the harmony of the outward nature with our own reaches.”

He is bold man who would draw the boundaries of the Real and say:—“This *is*—that *seems*.”

The great man knoweth death is larger being; and one who is great hath said:—“It is the *sleep* that knows no waking.” Again, the words of the Psalmist:—“He giveth His beloved *sleep*.”

But whatever goes to make up the woof and warp of dreams, I will state that my *Pastoral* is a *dream* of Spring.

For valuable aid in obtaining statistics of the Parish of Point Coupee, and other information, my thanks are due to the Hon. L. B. Claiborne, Judge Robert Semple, and Doctor Chas. Menville, of New Roads, La. To Mr. J. H. Siebert, of “Home Place” Plantation, and to Captains Prince and Mossop, on the Mississippi, I am indebted for hospitality and courtesies.

In placing my completed work in the hands of the publishers, the memory is with me of one who aided the suggestions and early progress of its theme, by his father-like sympathy and counsel; one who has passed into Life since the opening chapters were penned—Col. F. L. Claiborne, the venerable Mississippian and kinsman of him who gave “Claiborne’s History of Mississippi” to America.

And of thee, dear friend, to whom all facts have “become dreams, dreams facts,” I ask—for in the vast life that we live there is no real separation save that of good and evil—that thy spirit will shed upon the result of my labors, something of the old time benediction!

*Natchez, Miss., March 15th, 1895.*



# THE NEW PSYCHE; A PASTORAL.

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## CHAPTER I.

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### Come, Let Us Worship Beauty.

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Tiptoe poised on verge of sun,  
Peers the Sprite, in essence one  
With the High Twain, Life and Light,  
Of our earth to catch the sight,  
O'er the rim of utmost space.  
    Away! Away!

His burning tresses are astream  
'Mid quiet stars; his hands do seem  
Tossing back from brow of light,  
Elemental rainbows bright.  
One flame foot 's aswing. God's grace!  
    It is noon day.

---

Pale green meadows wave away to meet the saffron tones of the lower sky.—Virgin fields. A stream binding the meads together with blue lovers' knot. On the stream a green island; below in the waters the island again, mirrored as white souls wear God. Here and there in the distance, tall sugar houses covered with ivy like desolate altars. Near, an Arcadian hut and Spring orchards of star-like blossoms. Broad lilies on the blue waters; beside them, great eyed

cattle asleep—Jersey and Guernsey—among lotus crests golding the margin. Above, amid the young green of old oaks, gray mosses dreamily waving. No sound; yes! the call of nesting mocking bird. No movement; yes! the fall of pale Oleander blooms, of white Apple blossoms, of petals in Cherokee hedges, the canticle of quickening life. Around, gold living light; up from maiden fields streams an orange glow; through all, the pale fine fire of new born Spring. High, in the childlike blue of zenith, skims gray Crane from sea marshes. Hark! the great bell of yonder plantation calls the field hands to dinner.—It is noon on *La Belle Rivière*. Hear again! a sweet sound from afar!—a long, low, caressing laugh half heard, of utter ecstacy of life and love! It chimes from the young Spring. April is only April's self in Arcadia.

Midday is golden upon earth; midday with its tremulous hazes, its mellow glow, its dreamy glories, its yellow lights. In the beautiful noon by *La Belle Rivière*'s lake-like stream in New Arcadia, the Arcadia of Louisiana, rests Gran'mère's cottage,—dear Gran'mère who lives with gold haired Babette by the Cherokee roses of Point Coupée, scarce four miles from Rose Hamlet, the county seat of this parish.

Yonder, between those Oleanders, nestles the Olende Cottage, the home of Gran'mère, Marie Olende ; the straight white smoke of its chimney seems the Angelus rising to heaven, while the bell for noon day prayer sounds faint from the distant village. Little of the cottage is seen over here by the river ; only the low thatched roof where blue wide-eyed flowers peep from the mosses and litchen, and the rough wooden stairs leading up to the loft from the outside. Not a glimpse does one get of the neat earthen floor, of the stout walls with fresh dirt filling up the gaps between great logs from the Pine lands ; of the two little chambers, with doorless arched opening between them ; of the wee porch where the "Star of Bethlehem" glimmers ; of the broad, low lattice, where sweet-pea flowers have grown so tall these golden days, as to thrust within their rose and purple heads, and saucily nod :—*"Nous sommes jolies, Babette ! nous sommes jolies ! (We are pretty, Babette ! we are pretty !)*

And what do the pea-flowers see, and the pale, sweet stars at the doorway, that never they grow aweary, and turn to the breeze from the river that woos them all the fair day, as grace woos a soul that is pure ?

Is it the low white bed with its home-made Arcadian bed-spread,—a snow flake lost from the winter ? Or, is it the shrine and waxen St. Agnes,

a thought of God among lilies. Is it the fragrant thyme that swings from one wall to the other, shedding an humble sweet odor like the heart of a maid at Confession? Is it the loom or the wheel, or the rosary there on the dresser, like moonbeam on breast of a virgin? Is it the rush-bottomed chair or,—is it the maiden within it?

Oh! it is the maiden within it, for Babette has eyes with the Spring in them, and the blue of the beautiful river; and the eyes have gold curling lashes and reveal the Pure, as the half lifted lid of a Chalice. And Babette has the sun in her hair, the sun of Spring, pale gold, that veils its face in mists in the morning of the year, and prays to God.

How fair the plump little hand resting upon that great black wheel; how that mazarine blue cotton gown clings about glimmering whiteness of throat and neck, like a strip of sweet sky to little opaline clouds; Babette is a wee bit of heaven. She sits in a great broad sun-ray; her star-like curls have shaken themselves out of the high Arcadian braids, and stream about her like the halo in her little print of St. Agnes with the Lamb; one wonders where the hair begins and the sun ray ends, or whether it be hair or sun. Shy gold rings gleam on the low broad forehead, like little chancel lamps on white holiness. The mouth has the pure curves of the race, with the coy warm

kisses bursting through, as a bruised field flower that awaits the honey bee, with all its sweetness on its lips; and the mouth of this little maid is tender with her unawakened power of love; full—nay, one does not think of such things when one sees Babette, somehow one never looks at her, but *through* her to the Truth beyond; something there is upon her face and form as vague, as intangible and no more to be described than the life and force of Spring or the odor of her native Cherokees. One feels the God within; there is that strange half awe akin to sadness in her presence, that is one with the eternal Beauty which penetrates and moves all life. The village folk are vaguely conscious of this, but can no more analize the sentiment than they can analize the sunset blush or the river's blue. Even the rudest lad knows something of it; Alcide and Jeannot never kiss Babette on Fête days, or at the village games, as they do Margot and Eliska; though envied of the hamlet is he, who wins the look that comes into her eyes at times. The maid has such virginity in the virginal lines of her body, that it seems pure with the purity of intense cold. The Chastity of Spring folds around her like Baptismal robe; and as Communion veil, lies the glory of youth upon her head. Her soul seems born with crown of grace upon it, at times one almost sees it shimmer, and the old folk of the

village cross themselves and say—"Our Babette is not as other maids; Chérie, you were born as the roses are"—And in truth she is almost one of them. Babette is like pictures of Virgins one sees in great Roman missals; and the curves of her neck and shoulders like the Saints' in Cathedral windows. She is a vision from Scripture, a page from Revelations. Her pale, spirituelle, flame like beauty falls from her as incense from censers. One looks upon her and feels she is not fulfilment, but a promise, the fire woven veil of the Holy of Holies, half revealing the Perfect; a virgin Prophet of the Beautiful, a consecrated Priestess of the Word; at once a mystery, a solitude, a light. Yet, Babette is only a little peasant maid, living in the simple, hardy Arcadian way, kneading and baking, weaving and spinning, as other lasses by *La Belle Rivière*; dreaming by night and singing by day with a voice that sounds like a little Mass bell, of the true love she knows "is coming, is coming."

Babette is fourteen now, and at fourteen one is quite a woman grown in Arcadia, and has one's trousseau stuff laid away in the great chest in the loft where white rose leaves rest upon sweet linen, like grace upon an altar cloth.

No one ever calls her anything but Babette, except indeed, the *ROSE OF ARCADIA*, for one sweet morning when the Spring Babe was trying

hard to thrust her little pink fingers through the tight pale buds of the Cherokees down by the river, Gran'mère sees something that looks like a big blown rose in the hedges. Is it the young soul of the season moving among new leaves?—Gran'mère does'nt know, but crosses herself; Sainte Marie! it is a wee human thing and it wails like a little nest bird. A foundling! But the Arcadian's faith is a faith that is love, and Gran'mère takes a little sweet limbed babe to her heart; and within the Olende cottage there comes the light and life, the flush and odor of Spring, as in all the Cherokee hedges of the *Parishes des Arcadiens, the roses bud.*



## CHAPTER II.

### Rose Hamlet.

Spring is Love,  
And Love is Spring.

A greening irregular street, low cottages in wee square gardens linked by far reaching rose vines; each cottage and garden is as like its next neighbor, the next and still the next, as those two big roses. This hamlet is a sweet checker board with roses for lines of division. Great white roses, sweet white roses; roses nodding from verandahs, roses peering into lattices, roses tossing from gable ends, roses tumbling in delicious riot from eaves and rafters; roses wooing roses from either side of cottage gates; roses playing at hide-and-seek along fences; roses clinging to draw chains and peering down into old cool wells to laugh at water roses; roses swinging from dove-cots; roses framing bee-hives; roses piling in nooks and corners of wall and street and garden in wonderful masses of odorous white beauty, like white-capped nuns at Chapel, chanting the hymn of Spring to invisible shrine of the Mystic; whispering how glad and sweet a thing it is to be a rose and blow in Arcadian weather.

There, past the homes and the roses, is the village church; it shows pure white against the chaste blue of sky, like grace new fallen from

Heaven. Yonder, still further down the road, are homes again and the roses; then the common field and the orchards. This road is greening, for Spring has just passed through the village. See! blue blossoms and white blossoms hide in sweet pale grasses, peep blue and white, white and blue, now blue, now white, down the right side, down the left side of the road, like half hidden fresh benedictions—a rosary with grass for the chain and blossoms for Ave Marias. Two, three, half a dozen white things nod quite out in the middle of the road in those brown ruts made by the wains of the village; they seem holy thoughts astray. Over there, just across from the church, between those two cottages where we catch a glimpse of blue river stands the white cross of the mission. Against the young sky tint is a flock of doves. Hear the faint rustle of wings,—now the sound of cooing! It is the whisper of Spring. This is the way Spring comes to Arcadia, always with doves and with roses. And this is Rose Hamlet in April.

Faintly as yet, but distinctly, all through the parish and hamlet is felt the influence of the season. Animate and inanimate nature grow conscious. Something is astir, something holy and beautiful and all pervading; earth grows sensitive; nature feels; bud droops upon bud and to hearts come

the *knowledge of human love*. Soft unrest is upon all things, the awe of the Will moving from Bosom of the Father through the lilies and the soul. There is a movement as of birth, a tremulous waiting ; from the womb of Life comes the mystery of Spring.

And the pulse of the Spring beats louder, it is almost audible, and—Babette is coming,—young maid Babette shedding sweetness around her,—Babette with her virginal beauty. She passes the Courthouse ; now seen, now lost sight of, down, down, still down the village street twinkles the little gown of bright Cottonade.

There is a sun bonnet in one hand, an egg basket in the other. She has been on an errand of mercy to Mère Rose's cottage at the end of the fields, singing still singing of her true love that is coming, “ her Prince who will ask for a rose ”—for thus he will greet her the flowers have said, and the stars and the voice of the river ; and the day when he will come will be a King of days.

Babette is a little dreamer, she knows nothing of life outside Rose Hamlet, cares for no book but her illuminated Bible ; but the Saints from its glorious pictures come down and walk in the fields, and fairies she meets by the river. Babette is in touch with all purity and grace ; she walks abroad with Beauty, she is part of the All-Fair, and in it as in a pure mirror, finds only Babette,

for Beauty is one as Love is one. Her life is a perfumed altar flame that ascends to Heaven because it must; a silver clear spring bubbling skyward by reason of Nature's decree. She is a thing of Spring akin to light and trees and water; she dwells in the midst of a larger and broader Life, and her soul is the pure white page whereon is traced golden letters of that Law of which the maiden form is the incarnation.

See! she gains the open space; there, where the trees are and the band of blue river; as waters flow into waters, as leaves rustle among leaves, as grasses wave among grasses she comes among them; nay, is not among them, but *of* them; she glides into them, is one with them and of their essence.

And the pulse of Spring beats louder.

There is a rose in her hair. Oh! shy Babette! Sweet Babette! Strange! her Prince seems nearer to-day. She hears so plainly the Voices of the Mystic and feels in her heart something atremble like a little bird under leaves; the Invisible holds out to her some new and wonderful happiness; holy mysterious voices bade her wear a rose, a pure white rose.

Babette of Arcadia, fair young bud full about the heart with unborn rosy sweets.

Spring is come, Spring is come! Hear! a faint sound from the river, a stir in the hedges makes answer:—“Spring is come, Spring is come.”

She heeds not, but stands quite still and listens, listens, listens.

A voice from afar over meadows, now nearer, nearer still, quite near is singing:

*“O! je vous en supplie  
Donnez moi cette rose qui touche votre main.”*

New sweet lights come into your eyes Babette, the egg basket falls from your hands; this breeze from La Belle Rivière will toss it out upon the blue. The basket moves;—it rolls to the water’s edge; it flutters from that tall reed. There is a lull—your chance little maid, a moment and the wind will come again. Ah! Babette, Babette, this is no time for dreaming!

At last,—she springs to seize it, eyes aglow, lips apart.

“I will fetch it, Mam’selle.”

Blue eyes deepen with startled appeal, they look into a pair of lucid greys,—that young Arcadian has leapt the Cherokee hedge. A rush, one, two, three great strides through green rushes. There, Babette holds the truant thing once more. He hands it to her with the simple shy grace of the Têche. Their hands touch; nameless sensation flows over them, too vague and indefinable

to be called feeling; far off strings are being touched. Nature's hand is on the Lute of Spring. They stand face to face struggling with intangible influence; it is as though a gossamer web of light were upon them which they feel but cannot touch or remove.

The youth is less robust than most sons of the race and has a rare beauty which is soft without effeminacy, combining dreamfulness with force. He is well knit though frailer, less tall, muscular, and broad shouldered than men of Nova Scotia; of slight build and stands there a form of grace in those homespun trousers and blue blouse. One sees that his hair has reddish tones; that broad yellow straw hat rests carelessly upon it; there is a pale blonde growth about his lips; they show extreme sensitiveness and unconscious power. The forehead tells of dormant mental strength, and the eyes have an abiding wistfulness of one who looks afar, seeing visions and living amid day dreams. It would seem this Arcadian were half child, half poet.

Youth and maiden are flushed with the race and new sensation; vaguely they feel themselves drawn closer to nature; it is as though this rose light of passing day were being absorbed into them. Mutely, they stand on the threshold of

Sun World of Love and Beauty, for the first stirrings of pure human emotion are holy, and as milk white lambs for the altar of God.

All unconsciously, words escape them here in the reddening evening:—

“Spring is wonderful!”

“Spring is beautiful!”

Now, more naturally:—

“My name is Pierrot, Pierrot St. Eloi. I come from the Têche—the Bayou des Arcadiens,—and I seek Mon Père St. Cyr down in the hamlet yonder.”

“I am Babette and live with Gran’mère; but Mon Père lives—look! you can see the chimney there,—over there by the church. You will not miss it, —nay, I will take you myself, may I?” shyly, “you were good to me.”

Sunny brightness wakes upon his face, the simple and sweet radiance of nature’s perfect purity.

“Oh! if you would, Mam’selle, I should like it so.”

They look full upon each other by sudden mutual impulse; the first swift flush, new and faint, dawns upon Babette’s cheek and brow; upon cheek and brow of Pierrot; they are bewildered, half happy, half affrighted.

To all the human comes the hour of awakening, the Genesis of Mind, when the nude spirit revealed unto itself, stands amid its fallen veils and looks

upon the Mysteries of Being. Love speaks to the darkness: "*Let there be Light!*" And with the break of the soul day, as with that of earthly morn, comes the holy glow of pure human brows, fresh sprung from the fount of Universal Dawn whose living waters flow crimsoned with His Blood.

Again Pierrot, as they retrace their steps through the hamlet—

“ You have not yet told me your name.”

“ Babette.”

“ Yes, Babette I know, but the other,—your parents’ name, Mam’selle.”

She is kept as fresh in her great innocence as dog violets in snow.

“ There is no more. I am only Babette, and they call me the *Rose of Arcadia*. Ah, see, Monsieur, there is Mon Père himself.”

The voice bursts from her, high and clear:

“ Mon Père, Mon Père St. Cyr! here is one to see you, Mon Père—he goes to ring Ave Maria, we must wait.”

Again they are silent. The mocking bird in the great oak by the river answers Babette; her voice is the voice of all living things, it is the voice of Lily of the Valley, and of Rose of Sharon; nature gives it back because it is a part of her and swells the Vernal Hymn.

They have reached the greensward opposite the church and stand in the pale shadow of the great white cross; La Belle Rivière almost laves its foot, it is as though the Holy Spirit brooded by the waters. Just opposite is a low broad band of daffodil sky; the river takes on intense blue; the golden lobe of Sun suspends between stream and sky; now it touches the current and shivers into a thousand splinters of light that shoot long, glittering, sharp spears and fire needles down into the waters and up into the purpling sky blush.

Notes of the Angelus come. The hamlet is in gloom; the river in radiance; and the cross shows forth as if in *bas relief*. Instinctively, youth and maiden kneel; the sun-like head bends low and almost touches the red-gold one; Babette's hair seems braided light. The white rose has caught the last sun ray and shines out in this faint twilight like Peace made visible. She bends too low; the rose falls to the ground; it arouses them—the faint movement felt rather than heard; Pierrot is saying:

“ See, there is Mon Père again, he has left the church.” Regretfully, “ I must bid you adieu—and thank you, Babette.”

The words come slowly with a vague, half dreamy regret in them born of the intangible influence of the season.

She answers—as vaguely and regretfully:  
“ You go! Not yet, not yet; wait a little.”

Above the murmur that arises from the young year, swelling, falling, now gathering strength, now dying, for the second time the voice of the Arcadian:

“ *Si vous me regrettez, O! je vous en supplie,  
Donnez-moi cette Rose qui touche votre main.*”

And thus he has come,—her Prince who would ask for a rose.

She starts as if just awakened. A flood of light seems to sweep over her, it touches them both, they stand within it. Now is the maid a human mirror crystal clear in which a great Truth looks upon itself; a transparent tabernacle where a Mystery sits. Out of the measureless trust, the supreme simplicity, the perfect nature of her, she speaks, her lips still sweet with prayer—

“ You have come, I knew you must, and I have waited.”

Little white hands with a great white rose are outstretched, quivering; as with one impulse, the youth’s are extended to receive them, and tremble. He would answer,—she is gone! He is gazing after her into the distance and a drowsiness comes upon him; it is sudden; he has not felt it before. He remembers the way is long from Atchafalaya to Rose Hamlet: he has trod the

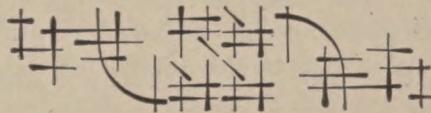
leagues; he must sleep—here by the cross and the darkling river; he will seek Père St. Cyr at dawn, not now.

And the Arcadian dreams a dream he cannot understand:—*There is a Mystic marriage rite. Love and Beauty stand before a great white Throne and pledge their union with a Rose. The name of the high priest is Spring.*

Babette scuds through the twilight fast as flying feet can carry her, onward, onward still, yet faster. New shyness has taken possession of her, she may not pause nor look behind. A strange, sweet joy steals through her frame. She must fly—she knows not wherefore—blindly, swiftly, to deep woods. It is the impulse of the hare of the forest, of the deer of the mountain, of all lesser creation. And through the Scale of Life one impulse runs. On the Heights man stands alone; he kneels apart on Calvary and Tabor. Supreme emotions are solitudes; in their birth moment, as in that of death, the naked human heart would throb on Christ's and bound forth to meet Him through thy silences, Oh! Nature, dear interpreter of God.

And Babette flies through the twilight. There! she strikes her foot upon that great log; it recalls her, she is startled now; night gathers and she has wandered far; she feels the weight of the egg basket upon her arm, and thinks of Gran'mère

who is waiting, the hens to be fed, the pea flowers to be watered. She turns swiftly; now darts off in the direction of the Olende Cottage and runs, runs. And her heart is as a little bud swelling, bursting, opening. Does she hear it throbbing as she goes, or is it but the beating pulses of the Spring? List! the throbs grow clearer, and more strong; again in the thickets of Cherokees, *the Roses blow.*



## CHAPTER III.

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### Love and Lilies.

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It is Easter Morn, the Morn of Lilies. This stream of Arcadia Lies faintly violet between Pale gray lilac shores. Purple Dawn hues rest upon it. On its breast Lilies tremble wan shadow blue, And pallid white in amethyst Light. And lilies tremble. Hark! A Footfall—Christ walks among them. From Yonder bloom mid-stream floats upward Virgin Spring, Bride of God; in her Hands are lily sheaves that blow and Blow; upon her moon-like brow do Lilies gleam as day-stars. She lifts Her mist veil to the Lord. Glory Of Dawn falls from her. Nature takes On a universal blush. And Lilies tremble. Speaks the Master, “Peace.” *His word is Day.* See! Dewdrop Faints on Morning-Glory’s lip, for Holy rapture in Easter morn!

---

La Belle Rivière. This morn is wonderful and golden. From the herd on those faint green meadow lands comes sweet sound of sheep bells. On the river blow great blue and white Lilies, Vestals of Spring; far and near, up stream and

down, still lilies and lilies. Those pure white and dun heifers are chewing the moss of the river. Faint purple mist clings to meadow and water; the light is carnation; the atmosphere shimmers gold; it is of ethereal transparency and reflects the sun rays exquisitely, purifying and spiritualizing every tone. Now there is a wonderful whiteness, see! it beams and blushes into every hue of flame opal. Low heliotrope lines follow the course of the river; they are where morning-glories swing the great purple bells of morning; hear! from copse and hedgerow, bush and moss-bannered tree, the all-present Mocking bird answering, sings. Now opens the wide Temple of the Day; matins rise. Dear Brother, walking down the morning groves, according to thy spirit's clearness, thou dost hear but voices of passing life, or hosannas of Love that is, and behold, or see not fairness in the waking fields. God is Beauty; *the clean of heart see God.*

A Mocking bird sings in Gran'mère's lattice. Babette awakes; she looks like a great lily, the lily queen of lilies; there is lily odor in her soul, lily fairness on her brow, and dew upon her brain. She cannot think what day it is. Ah! a glad little cry,—she remembers—it is Easter Morn, Resurrection Morn, Morn of the dear Christ and His lilies. This thought adores the God Love;

the next—for Love is a great Light, the Sun of Suns, divine alike in human soul and Angel; the Great Cause, an all pervading essence—and the *consciousness of human love* falls like snow flakes over her spirit. She wonders, only half wonders, —she hardly knows she wonders—if it might be, if it should be, that Pierrot St. Eloie will serve the Easter Mass. Léon Robin, Mon Père's assistant, is ill; Pierrot may offer, and—

Now she bears in mind the eggs to be gathered together. One thinks in Arcadia the whole year round of the fun of cracking eggs with one's neighbors before the Church at Easter; have not one's mères and gran-mères done so ever since the first rose bloomed in the hamlet? The girls of the village like it, the lads are sure to be there, and Babette,—why, Babette likes it too; she is only Babette, and a little Arcadian maiden. She thinks how brave she will look in the white gown Gran-mère wove for her last Whitsuntide, and which she only wears on great Sundays and fête days. She thinks of the laundered kirtle like a big snowdrop; of the blue ribbon she has placed in her cap. A returning wave of feeling breaks spray-like into thought of her Prince who had come through the sunset and taken away the rose. He is still her Prince, this Pierrot, and would yet be so had he appeared in beggar's guise under the foretold conditions. He is not the Arcadian,

but an ideality in form of the Arcadian ; a result, the outgrowth of her peculiar mental position. Her faculties are in that fine condition when the influence of form and matter is unfelt, and what is sensual and real is whelmed in the ideal and intangible ; it is the *beatitude* of senses.

Babette is nearly ready now, very nearly, quite. All the while these thoughts have been running through her busy brain she has been dressing ; Babette never loiters, but makes her toilet like the birds. To-day, she feels a strange impatience, and a new joy that is like dawn breaks and unfolds within her into increasing beauty and brightness each moment. It is the unwritten Vernal Gospel. Again, the blessed Saints have been with her. She dreamed all night of her Prince standing amid the yellow corn ; and the voices of the sheaves called them together, and hedgerow and tree beckoned them to approach each other.

She throws open the casement ; the soft lustre of the day comes to her full of undefined forms, and the air with vague whisperings. She is *in touch* with all nature ; there floats unto her with the thousand murmurs, the infinite fragrance of morning, the fullness, the tenderness and the might of Spring. She hastens down the cottage steps into the garden. Spring is here, Earth's sweet Betrothed, and Virgin Day. Babette's life

is as the day; Eternal Law is manifest. She is happy with the vague, expectant happiness that surrounds and pervades all things; an unseen Power is felt,—*the Spirit of the Spring*. With each moment her state of feeling becomes more intense; she is glad as those Easter lilies down by the gate are glad, for very joy of being. They seem to say to her: “*Sweet Sister you will meet him, you will meet him:*” and the river Lilies to whisper: “*Be patient and wait, be patient and wait.*” Buds burst forth around in myriads; the foliage is of deeper green than at yester eve; countless leaves have shot out in the night; grass blades are broader, between them is a carpet of bloom. Here is a lizard on Gran-mère’s young pea vine; tiny beetles sun themselves in the path. Earth teems with young broods; a world of moving life comes forth. Odors are stronger; the voice of field and wood gains power; the bird chant sweetens and grows universal. That was the Oriole just now; Babette loves it; she was never heedless before; her thoughts deepen; she is absorbed. A grasshopper swings on the pale new weed at her feet unnoticed though she looks full upon it; in the broad Morning she beholds but one face; in its voices hears but one voice. O! son of man, who lookest upon earth and stream and seest in all things the image of thy Beloved, it is no dear delusion, but truth, which is Beauty.

From the Central Love we draw our separate loves; Heart and Nature, sisters in the Holy Scheme, give back the features of the Parent Love.

“Babette, Babette, chérie, come Mignonne.”

Gran-mère Olende calls her to breakfast. You go reluctantly, Babette, as if you are half conscious, and walk in a dream. Good Gran-mère, even brown bread and sweet milk are scant temptation when it is Spring, and Easter Morn, and one is waiting for one *knows not what*. That which in the dawning year men call Promise, is Pure Desire in awakening soul.

Hear! Babette,—still lilies are calling. See! Babette,—the flower of Arcadia makes white the Cherokee hedges,—*the Roses unfold*.



## CHAPTER IV.

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### “The Passion of the Groves.”

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Thus spake First Spring to a Heart and a Rose:  
“Sweet daughters, salute me, I pray.”  
Flower, in answer, poured odor around,  
And Heart dropped its love on the day.

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This is the village Church. Long, low, cool, sweet smelling. Stainless, whitewashed weather boarding. Wood altar gleaming pure in chaste Easter cloth. Lilies everywhere; gleaming from rafters; clustering in corners. Those great beams overhead are clothed with them; they are lily beams. Lilies everywhere. Lily bank at the Altar base; lily band upon the Altar. The great lily twining about the cross looks like Purity revealed. Those tall lilies, among star-like tapers, seem Virgins chanting the Easter Canticle; the lights are the lamps of the Virgins. The altar looks the Lamb resting on Lilies. The white spots, here and there, in the building are the

maidens' Communion veils left on the benches; they seem like Peace descended. Cool and restful, this Arcadian Church. How sweetly mocking birds sing in the rows of open windows on this side and that. That soft swish and rustle is the brush of the Cherokee branches outside against the casements. A cowbell sounds clear from the pastures. The place is bathed in sun-rays; Heaven of Heavens has opened that Christ may hear the lilies' hallelujahs.

Mass is over. How crowded the Church porch is now. One can scarcely hear one's voice for the merriment. Take care! those egg shells are slippery; every inch of space is strewn with them. Fun is at its height. See! there are Easter eggs everywhere. Look at those great market baskets, they are full of them—red, yellow, green, purple; they bear the image of every saint in the Calendar. Those old dames on the steps have eggs; they are resting. How the knot of lasses chatter over there to the left. That little scream was Marie's. Jeannot has cracked her egg and claims it in forfeit. What a mass of color it is. A sea of blue cottonade gowns, of yellow homespun, of white newly starched kirtles, of caps with ribbons of all colors, darting, nodding, flying, tumbling awry, as their owners stoop to pick up eggs, or bend to catch falling ones. It is as though a bit of rain-

bow had come to earth and disported itself this Easter day. Was there ever such merry tumult, such laughter, such breathless exclamations, so many "oh's!" and "ah's!" and "I've won my prizes," and "come play with me's," and "mercies?" Was there ever such mirth, was there ever such gladness?

Green Arcadia! In many lands blows Easter Lily, and chimes ring in the great white Day; but *thy* flower is made of Heaven's grace, with the Father's smile for a stamen—such is the Arcadian maiden. A bell rings in thy rose groves God wrought of a sunbeam in shape of human heart, with innocence within for a clapper—such is the laugh of the maiden.

Pierrot has served Mass. Once, twice, thrice, his eyes have met Babette's; it is over now; she will wait. André and Jacquot plead with her to play at eggs; they are chagrined, she has never refused before, and they have waited so long for this. Here comes a group of lads to entreat her further; they do not understand—Babette is not Babette to-day. Those girls over there call and beckon to her; she does not go, but glides down the side steps into Mon Père's garden. This is a quiet little spot beneath these great white roses; she will wait—he will come to her.

He is come.—Pierrot is saying:

“You knew I would seek you.”

“I knew you would seek me.”

“I sought long before the Church for you, they told me you had gone; you do not play at eggs to-day.”

“The noises worried me. I will try with you; see! I have chosen my egg already.”

“You have many there, and beautiful; mine are only plain ones.”

“We will play now.”

They strike the eggs together—again; they do not break—once more—the frailer shell gives way; it is Babette’s; the shock sends her hand into that of her companion. Again their eyes meet; neither stirs. An intangible spell is upon them, and an influence is about them they are powerless to combat. They do not *act*, but are acted *upon*.

Pierrot moves slightly towards her. She is conscious of the faintest perceptible hand pressure, and cannot resist; it is more distinct now. A slight tremor passes over them—the music wave of sensation. Their hearts are as two reeds; the Spirit Wind sounds a faint note in Sonata of Spring. *And to them both comes power of human love*

A passing breeze brings swift sudden odor of Cherokees, and shakes strong perfume from the rose vine on the trellis. Life calls unto life, joy

unto joy. White leaves flutter down upon their heads, and on their virgin beings, the sweet first peace of Love.

Holy Spirit of the Spring, thou workest silently!

They murmur in turn, vaguely, and in half whispers, as one speaks in sleep:

“I love you.”

“I have loved you always.”

All power has gone from them, they are moved by one Will.

Pierrot leans yet nearer. Her sun-like hair floats on his breast like rays. The red-gold head touches it; it is as though a halo is upon them, the flame of inner light.

They start. There is a sound of footsteps. Some one seeks Pierrot. They are apart now, but near each other a last moment. Vivid forceful airs comes to them. The silence blooms. The sun is high on happy pastures. Glad fields are faintly golden in noon light. Hark! the call of wood pigeon to its mate. Jubilant woods are clothed in young verdure. Bird woos lover bird from rejoicing trees. Dove coos unto dove in the myrtles. Young life thrusts Beauty through bark and sod. Moments are pregnant with new fairness. The Vernal Mystery goes on. Spring flows widening around. It flows into them; for is Beauty visible Love,—Love invisible Beauty. Pierrot murmurs:

“I love you”—and Babette—

“I have loved you always. I have waited. I knew you would come.”

A laugh! “*Bon jour.*” “*Dieu vous bénisse ce saint matin!*” It is the *adieux* of departing merry-makers on the Church porch. Babette must follow. She moves dreamily after the village folk out to the Cherokees.

In wide Easter, *the Roses give odor.*



## CHAPTER V.

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### Cherokee Roses.

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A great fair Dove swept out to the sea  
In Springtide of old, and o'er Arcadie  
From the white purity of his long wings,  
Did blossom wild Roses, chaste, sweet, snowy things,  
And rolled a snow sea, Dog Rose, Cherokee,  
O'er woodland and lea, Dog Rose, Cherokee.  
"The Holy of Holies thou shalt ever be,  
Of Nature, O! Arcadie, green Arcadie,"  
Sang Dove, "and earth's children kneel here, Arcadie,  
In worship of Beauty; prithee, prithee."  
And thus the snow sea, Dog Rose, Cherokee,  
O'er woodland and lea, in fair Arcadie.

---

A purple quiet is on the rose glades. We stand in the heart of the Cherokees. Dim, shadowy lanes stretch vaguely purple in hyacinth light. To the north, and west, the Cherokees roll on and on, straight into the purple half-tones of horizon. Dim heliotrope mist lies faint upon this rose sea. Eastward the river flows the tint of lilacs. The West is a great mass of Tyrian hues. And in the lanes between the roses, the shadows deepen to hyacinth. A purple light is on the land; violet

dew seems falling. Arcadian fire flies show silver twinklings. Down rose aisles, and beneath the bushes, wood violet unwinds her carpet; every where glow worms shimmer on its folds, and gleam, and flicker until lost in distance. That solitary hut seems to rock upon a sea of bloom. The chimney smoke rises straight into air. The mud walls take on tinge of amethyst atmosphere. From iris sky shy stars look down on the river; little shooting white lights dart, and die upon purpling stream. Down yonder aisle come Babette and Pierrot. Roses are up to their elbows on either side; fire flies thicken about their heads. Their garments seem to melt into the twilight; they look a vision of star time. The Arcadian sounds a pipe of cane from the riverside; it is as the voice of Spring lifted up in the fields. The maiden listens spellbound. She has placed one hand upon his shoulder, the other holds back the hair from her forehead. Their faces are upturned to the stars and fire flies.

Pierrot ceases. They walk rapidly to Mère Rose's cottage. It is twilight now, the twilight that comes to the Cherokees.

The evening is warm. Here in Mère Rose's cottage the air is heavy with odor of pine cone fire in the open fire place. These strange perfumes are brewing herbs; the aroma is powerful, one

gasps for breath. It is a love potion preparing. A lad of the Hamlet found his way here last nightfall, and this is the draught that will give him the love of the maiden, will make her whom he loves his own; for, the witch woman gathered the roots by the light of the moon, at the hour when is heard the voice of the owl. It grows dusk. Through the arched opening in the mud wall we can see the outline of the other room of the hut, in soft tremulous gloom. The fire dies. There is a last vivid gleam and flicker. Weird things hang like fringe from the moth-eaten mantel; we can see them now. Those objects are rabbit feet; that pile of strange looking stones are buck-eyes. Dank weeds and sweet-smelling herbs dangle from cords stretched every where through the gathering night. Here is a pallet in this corner, with a homespun coverlet falling into decay. The tottering deal table, in the centre, has broken pottery upon it like that on the mantel. There is nothing more. The love philter is ready. Mère Rose leans to stir it, mumbling incantations. The door opens softly; Babette and Pierrot are within. The crone feels their presence, rather than sees them, in the semi gloom.—Ah! it is her “young Saint”, her “Good Angel”, her “White Rose”, her Friend;—the only living creature in the world who cares for the Voodoo woman. She has come now with her wholesome food,—*food*, and Mère

Rose hungers. How gaunt the witch woman looks. She has been ill, ill almost to the death, but there is that upon her worse than death; on soul and body is branded *Desolation*. It has blasted the great eyes in their glory and their evil. It has withered the full lips. Into the eyes has crept the gleam of the loveless, about the mouth has come a line that sears the all-forsaken. And the Voodoo is alone. There is no love for her; even her kin shun her. When the sun is high over the Cherokees, some love-embolden lad seeks her door, as on yester eve, buys a potion for his mistress, thrusting coin into her hand with gesture half loathing, half terror—and is gone. Now and then a slave from neighbouring plantation asks for a buck-eye to charm away rheumatism; a rabbit tail to bring good luck, or a spider in a nut shell to warn off ague. That is all of her contact with humanity. She dares not go to the Hamlet, lest she be driven thence. Her race will not come to her, she would bring disease to their bodies, death to their offspring. Her glance is worm to the cotton field, and blight to the corn. She is the Voodoo woman. In health she exists on meagre pittance from sale of her witchcraft—alone. In illness she must starve—alone. It was thus last fall and winter; but Springtime came and with it a Maiden like the Spring, with yellow hair, and eyes that looked beneath the hair, like tulip-bells

among May wheat fields. The witch woman's distress has been less since Babette learned of it one day ; she has come many times since then ; she is come now. Mère Rose hears the movement, and peers eagerly through the dusk :—

“Ah! *Mère de Dieu!*—you have come, the sweet saints bless you, you have food ; you are a bright angel. Mère Rose was sick ; she was like to die ; she has hungered ; there was no bread, no bread,—you are a holy saint”—

“Nay, Mère, the good saints are with God. See! this is cruel, you must eat, then you will be strong. And here is Pierrot ; he sorrows for you, and would come that he might aid you. You must eat”.

“Ha! *mon Jésus!* Mère Rose will eat”. She has clutched at the food, almost snatched it. There is a burning torrent of gratitude, her benedictions are fierce.

Pierrot would calm her, he has spoken twice :—

“Peace! we do little, Mère. We are not rich, we are poor and can do but little ; we want no thanks—nay”—wild words break from Mère Rose—“for thanks we will hear our fate ; when you have eaten you may read Babette's.”

She is silenced, famine is sharp, it masters her. She is conscious only of its cravings, and eats almost savagely. The food is gone. Again she mumbles benedictions ; they are less wild ; she is

more human now that starvation has gone from her. The dusk has deepened. Spring night folds into the room. Youth and maiden speak low to the witch woman; Mère Rose makes answer in whispers; the calm and the wonder of the gathering hush is about and within them. Nature moulds our being. Earth's inspirations make us what we *are* and *will be*. From a daisy may spring a mind bloom that out-stars Hesperus; and on a bird note be heard a music thought that will sing eternal in the chant of Mind. The three forms move toward the transparent square that shows pale light where the lattice is. A broad moonray cleaves the still gloom. They seem to float in it. Babette's hair has caught a white nimbus; she holds out the rose in her hand; the beam falls full upon it making it brim with light and gleam out in the dim like a fate star.

Mère Rose's form is sharply defined. The figure is crooked. The old red gown shrinks from the shrivelled limbs in rags. The blanched hair escapes from the bandana. The blighted breasts wither away from the tatters; their duskiness shows a scar, whose white lips were torn by the infant she bore to the husband of her youth. Those days her locks were as black as the crow's wing. Then her Antoine died. Mère Rose wept. Famine came, and a night when the babe starved on the parched bosom:—the morrow—*white as the*

*cotton bolls was the hair of Rose Gabet.* She weeps no more; her tears were dried up with her milk. Upon her now, there is something of dawning tenderness, mingled with the piercing glance of her race.

Babette's face is turned upward; the light flows over it. Her whole attitude is rest, the curves of her figure, peace.

Pierrot bends eagerly forward, there is more of anxiety in his pose; of wistfulness, and a gleam akin to fear in the clear tones of his eyes.

The witch woman chants indistinctly.—She has taken the rose, and is plucking the leaves; they fall like great pearls through the moonray, and lie dim, and white in the neutral tones of the room.—Babette and Pierrot bend lower still.—Ah! Mère Rose is nearly through—the fortune will be fair. She has ceased; the last leaf floats pale through semi-gloom. The woman holds the rose stem to view,—those are dark spots upon the calyx, and—a worm at the heart!

Mère Rose is saying in low monotonous monotone:—

“ *The rose's heart is gone. There is no sweetness, no beauty. The rose says this. There is a great light; and over a lake of beams two forms come floating. The waves bear them together. It is a youth and a maid. The maid has hair like the stars, and the hair of the youth is like the red winter sun. They meet—they melt*

into each other,—two yet one—one yet two. And they are happy as the blessed are happy. There comes a greater Light wrapped in a cloud; it floats towards them slowly; it hovers over the maiden; it descends upon her, it bears her away. I hear a great cry! It is the voice of the youth; he cannot follow, he stretches out his arms; he is alone; he cannot see the Light, only the cloud; he wanders up and down. Now there grows a brightness afar, the darkness will move, the glory will come again—and his Beloved. It descends once more,—stay—he must wait, and” —

Mère Rose can see no more, she strains into the darkness like one who walks in sleep. The weird mutterings die into half sigh, half moan.—She is exhausted, and sinks upon the chair in trance-like sleep. Babette and Pierrot steal silently out into the opaline night. The hour seems conscious.

Each heart stir is but a passage in Feeling's wide Apocalypse, the heard rythm of Being's song-like flow. Desire is truer than substance. Dreams are facts. Within us is the Kingdom.

A slight breeze from the West flits over the Cherokees; the Roses tremble.

## CHAPTER VI.

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### The Bridegroom's Footfalls.

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'Twas thus in Time's dim morn:—  
The young Soul opes wide its arms  
A Soul therein to clasp;  
And lo! but mocking shadows lie  
Enfolded in its grasp.  
And dear Soul sorrows on.

---

Night unveils. Moon in third quarter floats up sensitive zenith. A star burns green on east horn as torch at the gates of Celestial City. Moon and star hang glimmering in violet ether. Field and Cherokees are mirrors at the touch of dews, and shine back moon and star. A beam shaft lies obliquely on the river. It falls keen upon the cattle group on the left bank. They are Jerseys and Guernseys. And the lamp of glow-worm pales.

Babette and the Arcadian have reached the waterside. For the first time Babette speaks:

“What can it mean, Pierrot? We must love always, and yet the cloud, the waiting.”

“*Ma Mignonne*, it is nothing. The old Mère is ill. She has famished, and famine breeds strange fancies. We will not heed”—wistfully—“we will not remember.”

He cannot reassure her. The awe of the old Faith is with both, and the *consciousness* of Truth. All suns cast shadow; *they stand in the shadow of the Sun.*—

“We love, Babette”—

“Hush! Pierrot, listen! It may be that Mère Rose is right; the Spirits speak with her and they have wisdom. Once Mon Père St. Cyr read from the Golden Legend, of a Virgin who loved her Betrothed, but might not wed with him. They were one, for Love is One; but they could not reach each other. It was as though an invisible curtain were let down between them. When they would cling together, the Unseen held them back. Its voices would cry “Wait”. The Virgin prayed—and died. The Lover lived on a little while,—then died and went to the Beloved; and then, the Legend says, was *Love made perfect*. I could not understand, but now it comes to me. When my hands are in yours, I feel that I do not touch you. When you are nearest

to me, I would have you nearer—there is the *Veil*. And, Pierrot, I love you, and you love me. It seems my love is like the Cherokees that every day unfold a richer odor. I go to sleep at dusk and think I love, but when I wake next morning, my love has so much sweeter grown, I whisper, that was not love I felt last night, but this. And thus it is when nightfall comes again, and morrow; still I say, this is love, and this; and now—I feel I never loved till now, and yet—”

They stand on the chaste edge of the shaft of light. It looks an upbroadening pathway; they walk therein.—New Jerusalem unbars her seven-fold gates. Spirit awakening in pass of the affections, mounts, widening into Being. The still radiance of the night informs the maiden’s speech, half dream. She continues:

“ This must be love, Pierrot, it is so great, so strange”.

Her voice falls to a whisper. The embrace of the Arcadian is about her. It is the first caress, of Eucharistic meaning; young fruitage of the Heart’s Hesperides. Cornflower rests upon Corn flower; field mouse caresses its mate. Pierrot is speaking as if continuing her reverie:—

“ *Chérie*, and the Rose is sweet. We cannot tell why, or at what hour it found its sweetness; we only know it is a Rose. I love you, I cannot tell how greatly, or when it came, or how. I only

know I love. I think it was with me in the Bayou des Arcadiens, only I could not give it name until I came and found you Love, my Love"—and their lips met in the first kiss, chaste double Lily of mingled Souls; outward bloom of inward Sacrament. Hare-bell touches hare-bell in swaying meadow grass. Sweet breathed kine in pastures lean their necks upon each other.

Night grows silent with swift change of the region from bright to dark. Sudden clouds dull the moon sheen. The mocking-birds hush when she darkens. It is the tear-like gloom of stars. Youth and maiden are saddened, half fearful—a deer stands shy upon a mountain side. Afar, faint echoes of the horn sound throughout the vales.—

All joys are as rays from one Joy, proceeding thence, and returning to it's Bosom. The wider and deeper the Joy, the nearer we draw to the Sun of Gladness.

Joy is Beauty; the Way of the Beautiful, men call—Death.

The Rose of Desire, budding through the general heart, blooms only on the Hills of Transfiguration.

And night is silent. Spring deepens. In the groves of Cherokees the *Roses mature*.

## CHAPTER VII.

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### The Spirit of the Spring.

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All Beauty dwells within each heart,  
And there alone is found.  
But seek, O! Man, thyself aright,  
And Heav'n will bud around.

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The night is beautiful. Spring flings wide her countless portals; they make music as they swing. It comes to us in rush of leaves, haste of waters, crowding of grasses. Stars shed sparks from lips of light. Full moon looks down on river; full moon looks back from the waters. It is as May of earth to eternal May, a shadow. Spring matures and pours wine from her myriad blossom cups. Low in western horizon lingers carnation flush, as though "Beautiful Spring" breathed through Spring of Arcadia. Hosts of wild blooms crush and bruise each other in hedge and meadow; every wound weeps odor. Anon, there are cries of fledglings from innumerable nests; they are restless

now and would try their young wings beneath the moon. I hear the voice of sleepless mother to youngling that would wander, it knows not where. I hear the bleating of ewe unto folded lamb: it is impatient of sleep, and would sport in unrest of awakening life. Night breathes creative power. Around us circles strong life. The great Spring glitters with clear Being. Venus trembles into atoms, and sinks resolved into Desire into the heart of man.

Here is the Hall of the Hamlet. It casts oblong shadow out on the river in the light of the great moon. The rear of the building looks on brink of stream; this is the front on the village street. There is but one story; the logs in the roof peer unevenly over the sides, they are jagged and loose joined. There is no whitewash, and still a pine odor. The place is low to the ground, it is but one step to the big door. School is held here, and Catechism class on Sabbaths, and the village dances. It is the last day of the week now, and the hour of Saturday night's festivity. The row of earthen lamps sway merrily, and twinkle as the rafters are shaken by the dancers. The scene is gleesome; one's feet dance of themselves to the tune. Blithe Père Amboise was fiddler when the old Gran' Mères on that bench were maidens like Jeanne and Oliska. They are nodding now, their white caps keep time to the music. Gay Père

Amboise!—he sits on the great chair under niche of the Patron Saint of the Hamlet. To the folk are equally dear, the Père, and the good Saint Denis. Here the shuffling feet! What quaint courtesy Julie makes her partner. He is Alcide, son of Henri the Miller. They are King and Queen tonight. Always there is the Saturday night ball in New Arcadia; and always there is a King and Queen of the Ball. When it is over the Queen will choose a lad and dance with him, and he will be King next time. And the King will choose a maiden in this way also, and she will be Queen when Saturday comes again. It has been thus since the pioneers dwelt by La Belle Rivière. The door at the far end of the Hall, opposite Père Antoine leads to the kitchen. Someone has opened it. Smell savory Gumbo! Mère Cécile is brewing it. Mère Cécile is a Créole and came from New Orleans. There is no ball in New Arcadia without Gumbo. Then there is coffee for the young folks, and gooseberry wine for their elders.

Now housewives strain their crimson bodices as they bend in time with the music. The maidens are flushed, they have on fête day gowns, and each wears in her hair the flower that best becomes her. They bend in the courtesy, the scene is like spring field that wind blows over.

Babette and Pierrot stand apart from the revellers. Now they pass from the dancing hall into the night. Moon quivers down on grass which flows in blossom waves on which they seem to float. Mists are as veils shutting them into great Eden. The chaste alone may walk with Adam. The pure spirit is the new Eve. Thousand armed glory of Spring is about them; each arm holds forth lustrous blooms. The bright stream of their love seems to bubble and leap and sparkle. It is as though the Past had been destroyed, and all were fresh and young. Love is the only reality. Some notes from Père Amboise float towards them; and now each heart gives back the other's tones with sweetness of an echo. Both are saying—"It is good to be here." And Pierrot:—"I would be with you, away from them all, alone."

"And I."

"It is sweet, and I could wish it always so. You remember, *Ma petite Mignonne*, how I found you in the meadow with the Spring. Sometimes I dream we wander through green pastures, hand in hand, and bind ourselves with wild bud garlands, and follow the Spring over the field. We hear callow birds, and drink of young streams, and walk in new light. We seem to die with Spring, the blue sky over us, and our arms about each other on the sweet grass, only to wake and

live again the life of the meadows". He pauses, full of the joy and beauty of the image; again, less dreamily:—

"I like my life, *Chérie*; I love to hoe among the corn, and to labor in the rice fields. But as I toil, I have such thoughts at times; they come to me with my love. Speak to me, *ma petite angèle*; tell me, would you like it if it might be so",—falteringly,—“would you go with me away from them all—alone?”

The answer is shy, half breathed.—

“I cannot tell, it is so beautiful, but I cannot tell. There is Gran'Mère, and the pea-flowers, and the birds that come for their breakfast, and the Madonna in the garden. The birds would be hungry, the flowers would die”.—

The rings upon her forehead stir in the close breath of the Arcadian; *their spirits touch as wings of Angels touch*,—her words are soundless:—

“I will go with you,—away”.

“Hear me, Babette; we may not wander, but we may dwell together. Ah, Mignonne, say that you will come to me some day. I have built my dwelling by the water mill. I have dreamed that you might come. I have brought robin nests there; the birds are singing. I have planted my vine; it is in flower. Mignonne, Mignonne, say that you will come to me”.

Again the maiden makes answer:—

“You are my Prince. I will follow you.”

And they stand in the white betrothal hour. Around is the great hymen of the groves. Spring consummates the bridals of the dells.

New brightness is upon them. They pass into the Real out of shadows. Undefinedly, both are conscious of moral clearness, of mental growth. The Lover is the Saint, regenerated by new Baptism unto grace. Not alone of waters, but of the Spirit, which is *Love*, must the heart be born again, “that ye may have life in you.” And henceforth he treads Imperial Way of intellectual Power; for whoso hath Love, Reason anoints king-like with her chrism.

Softly, and as one, the Lovers reach their arms out to each other. Field Lily twines about her spouse beneath Spring stars.

Pierrot’s voice scarcely rises above voices of earth:—

“*Mon âme*, no other love was like to this; this only is love.”

Babette’s is lost upon the night chant:—“Only this, Pierrot, is love.”

Keen yearning is born within them towards every brother, and to all things. In this rose hour of life, doth great Soul embrace Creation, moving along its triune streams, and informed with the

wide tenderness of Paradise. It speaks with all loveliness, and with Art. Art is Love, the Lover the Artist, one with its Essence.

The Arcadian is urged by promptings of his love and of the time. He draws down the branches of the Myrtle,—he makes them into a wreath,—he places it upon the brow of the maiden.—The nesting bird brings offering to his mate.

Their hearts have wings of flame that bear them through all the loosened Spring. And in this night of Joy the great Heart of all seems palpable and burning. As when he spake by evening waters, once more doth the youth give speech to the vast Jubilee.

He murmureth :—“It is beautiful,—the world,—our love. Our life will be beautiful.”

The response, clear as gathering dews:—

“ Beautiful, my Spouse”—wide murmur of leaves makes answer unto winds. These are known to Arcadian Spring; rising keen, with a chill as of winter, though in Cherokee hedges the *Roses are perfect.*

## CHAPTER VIII.

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### “Ave Maria.”

---

O Love! O Desire! Thy ministries  
How dear, thou Warden of the Dawn,  
Sweet Death! Its fires cast upon  
Thy brow pure glooms,—rainbow-wise,  
Mild Azrael of New Paradise,  
And tender as the arc of beams,—  
Thou dost link the life that *seems*,  
Together with the Life that *is*.

---

The dance hall is still; no sound. The movement of feet has ceased. The laughter is hushed. The jest is hushed. Père Amboise leans his brow on the mute instrument; his white hairs trail over the strings. No sound. Ninette's voice is silent. Dancers kneel, where they stood up for the dance. Père St. Cyr is in the midst—their father. He has spoken:—“My children, there is ill news. I would not have another bear it, lest he should do so harshly. You have faith, and you will not

fear. Our Father, *le bon Dieu* will test our love: *the Great Scourge hath appeared in the parish of St. Landry.* It is at our door! Let us pray."

No horror, no dread, no tumult, only trust. The Father cares for the lilies and clothes them; they, His children, are dearer to Him than bird or lily; they pray. The Arcadian's life, the Arcadian's love, the Arcadian's refuge, the Arcadian's rest is prayer, always prayer.

A voice steals clear and low through the hall. It has note of widowed dove:—

"Beloved, my Beloved"—it finds its calm in "Ave Maria."—

Babette and Pierrot rejoin the folk of the Hamlet; the voice is the voice of the maiden. They have peace. There is no sound. The heart that loves, itself a part of the All Beautiful, hath unconsciously no fear of change, its Christ-like resurrection; for in Law of Decay is Beauty most beauteous. Birth and Death, garner and waste, are one. And of all Being is Death the marriage bed.

Sacred dew of Mon Père's benediction descends on the hearts of his children; without, the dew of Spring rains holily down on the meadows. White night moths flit beneath young constellations; and between them, upward and upward, new Arca-

dia's guardian Spirits rise viewlessly upward, bearing to Great White Throne their petition. Within the beam of its fires, mutely the Hamlet's patron, the great St. Denis, prays for Arcadia, and prays.

Earthward, chill winds pass over the Cherokees : the *Roses tremble.*



## CHAPTER IX.

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### The Golden Gates.

---

I hear Joy! Joy! 'tis clear aring  
Through Heart and field, and tomb.  
From perish'd blossom of to-day,  
The fragrant Easters bloom.  
Upon the moulding Lily's lip  
Delight doth sit and sing.  
Human Heart that melts to clay,  
Fading leaf, do bear alway,  
The furl'd gladness of the May,--  
All form, and Spirit's Spring.

---

Spring passes on. The Cherokees lie like white marriage garland across the land. There came a day when freed moth sprang joyously from chrysalis into air, with manifold shining flutter. Life's sweet laughter rang through empty cradles of the field. And was earth made glad, and smiled with child glee into May.

And Spring passed on. Scented grass blooms pinked and paled, and fell in creamy dust into recurring Spring, with all the humming, wooing life within them. Happy daisies drank deeply of the Sun, and poured their gold into the Aprils that will be. Red corn flowers then appeared and passed into the rosy sunsets of next Vernal time. Each Spring seems fairer than that gone before, even with the hoarded fairness of many Springs. And each season, man, with his accumulating years, stands nearer to Beauty, and hears more plainly the heart throbs of the Spring of Springs. The aged is Priest, old age Life's Priesthood. Afar and near, over hill, through pasture land, along roadside, over meadow, down footpath, clover crept song-wise, making fair the new Arcadia, and fair the hearts of her children.

And Spring passed on.

And now the red and white clover blooms, atwinkle through the meadows, go out like stars. The hum of the bee is heard down the pastures, and new honey is golding in the farmers' hives. And now young corn rises pale in sheath, as Virgin robed in her beauteous hair. The orchards have snowed their pink and white snows, and fruit hangs green on parent boughs; for is all Promise fulfilled, and Beauty, made Life, clings timidly to breast of the Great Mother. The loves of sky and field, and stream have waxed and waned, rosy

circles within circle of encompassing Love,—the Spring. And now the Spring hath hectic flush ; a rosier glow blossoms out in the sunsets ; blooms of early woods are sweet with perfume that is Death. And the death-bed is thurible whence Life's odor arises. Therein, Virtue spends its sweets, and affection is as spices. For Spirit draws anear her fragrant East, and breathes its musk, in last moments, earthward.

See! where earth and sunset mingle, two birds meet awing ! They show bright against the horizon. Oriole takes from Robin silver note of Spring, and flings it far, in gold of Summer song. The tune falls spray-like on the fields.

Early comes Arcadian summer, lending its rest to the Mays, oftentimes to the Aprils, of the Parish of Point Coupée. And while Peace deepened down on the meadows, and days grew longer, and brighter, there was toil in the Olende Cottage. Toil to the sound of spindle and loom, of singing hearts and voices,—the labor that is grace ; for, when May apple comes to the hedges, there will dawn a great day for Babette and Pierrot, and a maiden's wardrobe must be ready. And Spring passes on, and pass the days of the Arcadian lovers.

And now there is to be a wedding. It will be in this month of the Virgin, and on Sabbath, such the old Arcadian custom. The trousseau is

finished; the last stocking is knit; the last roll of homespun linen, woven by Babette herself, in the years she waited for her Prince, is made into garments as white as the heart of the little bride. They have brought to her the marriage portion bequeathed by Julien Poydras. Good Julien Poydras was the parish benefactor, and that of all south Louisiana. He it was who gave name to Poydras Street in New Orleans. He was a native of France, the first delegate to Congress from Louisiana after its transfer to the United States, and the first emancipator of slaves in the Union. In 1824 he went to his rest in St. Francis church-yard, leaving by testament the sums of \$30,000 each to the parishes of Point Coupée, and West Baton Rouge, the interest of which to be yearly divided among the brides of the two parishes. He died possessor of 338 slaves in Point Coupée and West Baton Rouge. And Babette's dowry bought a good milch cow, and kitchen utensils, and sweet warm blankets for winter.

They all wait for her in the little home by the lake-stream—Pierrot's home,—but she hardly knows of them; she has never thought of them at all, only of her Prince, the Prince of her dreams and day visions. He was to come to her; he has come; she will go away with him,—that is all. The feeling is as impersonal as Grace. She

does not love him, Pierrot, but the *love that is in him*. He is the embodiment of a Decree, the incarnation of a Truth. Her strength has paled with the passing of weeks. The light within her burns brighter. Beauty clothes her. The body's fairness is the Lotus that blooms upon Love's Nile-like waters. She is being absorbed into Life. Form is becoming all spirit, and spirit clothing in form. She feels the Heaven about her; there is a smile upon her lips as though they tasted sweetness. Gran'mère has sighed, and wiped away great tears these many times, for Babette is as a rose that must fade; or a beautiful day that must pale into twilight. Her dreams have entered into her; she has become as a dream to others.

This afternoon she is alone. Gran'mère Olende has gone to the Hamlet to sit with old Mère Découx who is ill, and will not return until the moon is high on La Belle Rivière. Babette is glad to be alone. Weariness is upon her; languor has been gaining all day. Twice or thrice this warm forenoon, the snowy linen fell from her hand, as she aided Marie Olende to pack the little square trunk that Pierrot will take to her new home on the morrow—her wedding day. When the old dame asked in sorrow, what ailed her, she said—

“I am weary Gran’mère. Last night I dreamed much, I will rest early this evening.” And the old fond peasant remembered that she herself had fainted away upon the eve of her wedding morn, and thought how her own mère, the good Lisette, had related that she [Lisette] had also been found ill upon her marriage day, in 1727, when, on the site of Rose Hamlet stood only the homes of the Gossarands and the Découx, whose children were the first whites baptized in the parish.—Scarcely a score of years before, La Belle Rivière, the river-lake of the parish of Point Coupée, was still an arm of the Mississippi, having not, as yet, been cut off from the main stream by Bienville, who, to facilitate commerce, changed the bed of the great river where it made this détour.—And Gran’mère murmurs “It is always the same with young brides—always the same,” and goes her way to the village telling her Aves. Allwhere Spring is in early decline. Allwhere come apace, the thousand footfalls of gold-sandaled June. And in waning Spring, and waxing Summer, Nature alike rejoices with boundless delight, for do Life and Death fulfil their mission, and “enter into the joy of the Lord.”

The Cherokees grow dim in the hedges; *the Roses droop.*

## CHAPTER X.

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### The Regret of Spring.

---

On the edge of green June pastures, Spring glanced the meadows  
o'er,

Fain unto Love to offer one fairest blossom more.

May blooms all hung paling, but on her dewy bed,

Lo! Amaranth with blushes a rosy glow did shed.

Straight, Spring plucked this, and turning unto him she lov'd,  
would give.

He speaketh at her gesture: "Sweet, who weareth this must  
live

Henceforth with Gods." She answered, "Know *Death is Life—*  
'tis best."

And drawing thence the sacred Thorn that in his glowing breast—  
By old Desire implanted—doth live and hurt alway,

She bound the wound a-bleeding, with the holy bloom straight-  
way.

---

The afternoon is sweet and still. Babette stands motionless within the Cottage. Joy permeates her being as an odor; her emotion is as incense stealing through mind and vein, bearing away self consciousness upon its folds. A light breaks upon her features; the smile is not sunny, but as moongleam on clear waters. She moves towards

the lattice, looks timidly down still lanes ; glances hastily backward into the chamber, Yes, Babette, you are quite alone ; there is no one to see, no one to know ; for the nearest neighbor is old Père Thomas who has been lame a score of years last Michaelmas, and two miles of La Belle Rivière are between his home and Gran'mère's cottage. She approaches the great chest, leans low over it ; now there is a white mass in her arms ; those are the bridal things, the veil and the marriage gown. She clothes herself in them ; she would look her fairest for her bridegroom, and would learn how fair that may be. There is to be a white rose wreath on the morrow ; Pierrot will rise at dawn and pluck the roses with the dew upon them. The veil enfolds her like mist ; it gleams silver in the ray of the setting sun. The maiden looks a white robed Spouse of the Lamb. And ever is Bride the Ark of Covenant, within whose bosom dwells graven Sinai. Let whoso would approach, be sealed a Moses with sweet ointment of the chaste. Babette would look upon herself ; she cannot see, there is no mirror ; she remembers the river. Then too, she yearns for the cool touch of the stream. All forenoon she has yearned to be out beneath the sky, to lie down on the grass. Earth's fairness draws her unto itself. Love seeks Nature, its interpretation. The Lover abides by wold and waters ; for is Love, light and

odor, color and song, their significance and cause. She steals down the yard path to the river brink, and leans towards the waters. The reflection is vivid. Maiden looks upon maiden. Babette starts; she is fair, but the image looks strangely. She trembles and passes her hand over her brow with gesture of physical pain. The old weariness returns, gaining strength. She wishes vaguely for Gran'mère. The forms of the Golden Legend are moving and crowding about her; there are the Virgins with palm branches, the martyrs crowned with red wreaths, with them the saints, the goblins and spirits of evil. The flowers sway towards her, speaking with voices like songs; and above all voices comes Voice of Spring's *Regret* :—it sings an undertone in every field; it makes sweet moan in heart of man.

And to the maiden, the murmurs grow indistinct, far withdrawn, and faint as notes of the Melodious Life that sound alwhere the *Desire* of Spring.—She has fainted lightly.—

“Babette, Babette! Where is *ma Filleule, ma Rose?*” Hark! that is the voice of Père St. Cyr. The Père has borne the White Host through the meadows to the dying. The tinkling of his acolyte's bell fell on the fields like dew, and the flowers stirred as though a mild sun were passing. He returns to the Hamlet by way of the Olende farm. He always does this when he may, for

well he loves to bless his child in grace. She does not haste to meet him ; ill has befallen. It has been her wont to give him welcome ever since the day they found her in the Cherokees ; when a wee maiden, she would grasp the tall flowers by the pathway to aid her onward. He catches glimpse of white robe ; he goes forward a few paces ; now pauses in great wonderment near the stirless figure. Babette's face is turned from him ; her form rests against young apple boughs. Père St. Cyr calls softly, he fears to startle her :—

“ Babette ! Babette ! ”

She arouses. With returning thought her being flushes with virgin shame, that Mon Père should behold her in her marriage gown before her marriage day ; it is as angel maid might blush who dreamed her holy brow was kissed by son of earth. She draws the bride veil around her, and would hasten from his sight, but the old habit of the faith prevails ; she bows her head for the blessing of Père St. Cyr.

And the late Spring is glad, though throughout the hedges of the Cherokee, in closing afternoon, *the Roses fade.*

## CHAPTER XI.

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### Hail! Sacred Light!

---

Straight into the carmine  
West scuds gray Owl on muffled wing. Faintly  
On the dim sound footfalls of Evening Star.  
Tossing high Holy Chalice of the gloom,  
He scatters stars and fireflies. *Twilight is.*

---

Mon Père's hands are laid on Babette's head. He stands erect, his eyes upraised to the iris sky. Light from out of the west plays upon the river, it has become a prism, and in the radiance Babette's gold hair burns out, and Mon Père's locks and beard gleam like snow that falls in moonlight. The bride dress glimmers; and the maiden's form takes on glory of the luminance around. The voice of Père St. Cyr rises in invocation; it is as though he were master singer in the cloister of Evening, and led the late Spring's "*Benedictus.*" He ceases; his blessing lies upon the twilight as robe of the Man of Galilee on Plane tree of the

desert. Babette has risen ; Mon Père bends over her, he would touch the brow of his daughter in Baptism with consecrated lips ; they would press the accustomed kiss upon it, even as they touch vessels of the Sacrifice. There are rings upon her forehead—golden angels at entrance of chapel—he removes them to give the caress—swift horror shudders through his body, the strong frame is shaken. In this dim half light Babette scarcely sees his emotion, but feels its *intensity*, the presence of strange dread. Now the tremor of Mon Père's hand upon her brow thrills her with new terror. She gives mute appealing look upward, it is the look of the lamb upon the death knife ; she utters no sound, no question. Père St. Cyr gazes dumbly upon her. He is still ; it is the repose of supreme emotion. His soul and life seem passing out in intense vision.

Not the span of a moment has passed ; it seems hours, such seconds are heart eternities. His face is beautiful with the beauty of the Trinity ; dread and anguish sweep over it unto peace, the Spirit overshadows him, but his lips move with the human suffering. A moment passes, his gaze is unrelaxed ; *a pale upraised scar shows on Babette's forehead.* His soul finds voice :—

“*The Plague ! The Plague !*”

With low moan the maiden bends towards him ; mild shadows close again about her ; the old Priest folds the virgin form unto his bosom, standing motionless with his burden. His lips move soundless. Moments pass. His spirit is in Gethsemane ; and now with Him who plead beneath Syrian Olives, comes once more the cry of the human :—

“ St. Denis protect thy people ; holy Agnes save this maiden—thou canst stay it Father ; mon Dieu ! *The Plague ! The Plague !* ”

The old man moves not, he would speak with his Master. Moments pass. Night grows upon the river. Dew comes on silver feet across the meadows, hanging a tear of the great God upon the blossoms of Arcadia. Silence deepens. Beauty’s thousand tongues seem hushed in awe of the Beautiful, and the pathos and mystery of its earthly doom. For doth it form with Love, the great Rose chain that encircles all created Being, whose clasp is Heart of God, and whose links are tuned to perfect sympathy. When aught of Love or Beauty suffers, or is glad, as fine electric fire, the smile or sigh, thrill the chain unto its limits, and men are glad or sad, they know not why.

Moments pass. Père St. Cyr stirs not.

Joy abides by field and stream, but in the stillness one hears the flutter of Cherokee petals, shaken earthward from their stems. Allwhere Spring furls her white banner. Shroud-like, and drooping, it enfolds the Priest and the maiden. The hedges move faintly; *the Roses fall.*



## CHAPTER XII.

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### The Marriage Beautiful.

---

Iris of twain human loves,  
In earthly waters born;  
Marriage opes above the stream,  
Through the Eternal Morn.

---

Père St. Cyr looks wistfully around ; he is thoroughly aroused now, and would cry out with a great cry. None can hear, there is no aid. His glance falls upon the bench by the river edge ; Babette loves it, it is her resting place ; he lays her thereon ; there is no choice, and water is at hand, — he must have water. The maiden lies like a dead lily ; she is pale, and as coldly pure as the river bloom the old man tears from its stem in his extremity to serve as a cup to give her drink. The swoon is deep. Mon Père laves her forehead from the stream ; there are no resources at hand ; he

kneels, bends low over the virgin form, the stream lily in his hand dripping waters upon her forehead. The river flows utterly blue; the ether is clear as Eye of God, and reveals pulsing half light, beautiful and quick, presaging the birth of stars; to westward one gold cloud flows out to sunset. Rose fire still burns along the horizon; the landscape lies in quivering dusk, sentient flame-like gloom, the consecration of the after-glow. Day is on its Tabor, and the gold cloud drifts out to sunset. The day is dead.

Babette stirs slightly; the Priest casts the lily on the waters, listens breathlessly. Again there is movement,—a moth falls fluttering down upon her breast, gasping out its life; it was born with this day's sun,—it must follow it,—the day is dead.

There is half returning consciousness. Her lids upraise quiveringly. *Mon Père* looks into her eyes; it is enough,—a fiat lies therein; upon her brow hath been set a seal. The maiden's life will go out in the shadow of her dread. She knows of her passing; the knowledge is indistinct and formless, less knowledge than sensation. Her mind wanders amid sweet fields of her virgin life and love. There is no pain. Peace dwells within her bosom. Like Agnes whom she loves, in ecstasy, in soft half trance, she looks upon the Beautiful by the great light within her; her spirit doth as-

cend the white heights where Rest abides. The soul lifts up the Body, as the Body lifts up the Soul, and upon the Hills all is calm and clear. One feels the Christ around ; the other Heaven touches this. The old Priest bends closely to the virgin ; her lips form words.

“ Pierrot....she told us, Mère Rose who lives by the Cherokees....the rose with the worm at its heart ; the great cloud comes to me ; it bears me away....you will follow soon....I see it, Pierrot, the Great Spring where our Spring goes when it dies upon the meadows,....the stars speak of it,....hear !”

There is a pause, breath will not come. Mon Père would soothe her ; she struggles faintly, and resumes :—

“ There are joy flowers with eyes of stars, dim myrtle groves that are always green. The skies are bluer than the skies of earth, the rivers sweeter than our meadow streams. But the bliss is not of these. There are bare white hearts with the song of singing birds within them, and the snow-like souls with the fragrance of the odor flowers. And do the forms float centreward unto one Presence, whose face I do not see. And there are mated hearts, for they have bride-veil on, and they are fairer than the other fair ones because of

*human love.* It will be thus with me . . . you will come, my Prince, my Beautiful, I could not dwell —alone.”

The lilies fold upon the stream, sinking one by one beneath the waters; the short river ripples sound in the stillness. The broken bloom drifts westward, a snowy speck. The fires burn low upon the horizon; the gold cloud floats out unto the sunset.

Life flows from her. A faint blue tinge steals mist-like over the maiden’s form; it is as pearl revealed through seas. The Priest beholds the veils; his sob is nearly soundless.

“Mignonne! Mignonne!”

Sweet tones of all nature rise up and break upon the virgin’s ear. Life is music; Being, one with melody. Heaven and Bliss are but the bursting forth of the Silent Song, the revelation to ourselves of melodious soul. Rising moon sheds down benediction. With faint cry Babette stretches forth her arms unto the new light. A form comes forth towards her, the form of her Prince unspeakably glorified, Pierrot made one with holy radiance.

It glides through space; it hath the Bright upon its brow, and the shroud about it, but the grave gear hath lining of lilies, and sheds sweet odor of many Springs, and gives forth the music of the woods. It floats towards her: Wide, wider, her pale arms outstretch to clasp it. Père St. Cyr

again woud calm her. It cannot be, she is strong with the strength of her love, and sits almost upright. Still the Spirit draws near upon twilight waters; still the maiden strains to its embrace. Moon goldens, the dusk is as wide halo; through the gloom sounds Babette's voice, grown deep with ecstacy.—

“Pierrot, the stars were right, and the flowers in Gran'mère's garden; *we have not lived till now.....you came to me through the sunset, we.....must go that way.*”

One draws near: a voice! one whose heart is happy—a song!—We hear the words:

“*Si vous me regrettez, O! je vous en supplie,  
Donnez-moi cette rose qui touche votre main.*”

Swift and clear the maiden's answer:—

“*Pierrot .. this....is .. Love.*”

A keen movement forward—the virgin clasps the Spirit form; she looks transfigured. Mon Père cannot stay her; she falls among the Cherokees.

The gold cloud melts into sunset. Evening gathers up the gamut of her hues and weaves them into a hymn-like crown; it beams, and spins a moment on the verge of gloom, and sinks in sparkles through the dark; *it is the night.* By the Cherokees, and the river, the margin lilies close about, and above the maiden form; in this chaste

half light they seem to spring therefrom ; *it is the night*. Stillness folded like a tired bird, anon makes whisper : *it is the night*.

Tree, and shrub, and flower give back the names, *Babette ! Pierrot !* And doth the field make murmur, *Babette ! Pierrot !* And waters even to the utmost waters, *Babette ! Pierrot !* The joyful hills and mountain places, *Babette ! Pierrot !* The sigh of desert, the carol of green woods, the pipe of grass, *Babette ! Pierrot !* Soul and the eternal heart, *Babette ! Pierrot !* For is Creation one, its pathos, its pain, and its impenetrable full orbed joy ; and is the laugh of the babe and the tear of the man, as impersonal and as universal as the gathering wind.

And hath love been folded unto Love, the beautiful unto Beauty.

High and blithe rings out the *chanson d'amour* ; the swain bounds on glad foot across the meadows ; again the words, this time clearer still :—

“ *Si vous me regardez, O ! je vous en supplie,  
Donnes-moi cette rose qui touche votre main.* ”

Pierrot returns from his hunt, with game to cheer the wedding guests upon the morrow ; he seeks his bride....and beneath the Cherokee hedges the *Roses lie dead*.

## CHAPTER XIII.

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### The Passing of Spring.

---

Soul hath her being through dumb,  
Unrevealing years. Suddenly,  
The great Hour pacing muffled at  
Her side, turns its sacred face upon  
Her. Spirit revealed unto itself,  
Passing from mere being into Life,  
Rounds out man's Cosmos.

---

The great overflow is upon us. The Mississippi, Nile of Louisiana, engulfs her bosom. It will teem with fruitage, like new made mother, when the river king recedes. It is the wide marriage of the land and waters, to which is born the white and gold harvests of the cotton and the cane. The coast is submerged, and the fields for miles inland. The strained levees are rent and ploughed into countless widening channels, through

which the victorious waters pant with boom, and hiss and yell, until the lacerated breastworks bleed at every vein like vast monsters torn in battle.

Here in Rose Hamlet there is no cemetery. The people love the old resting place of their fathers, the ancient churchyard of St. Francis; it is common burial place of the Parish. Back from *La Belle Rivière* the mournful Arcadian wends his way out to the Mississippi, to the venerable graveyard on its brink, to lay the newly dead in the holy dust of the pioneers. In time of flood the sacred custom may not be departed from; he must cross the great waters, floating the dead in stout bark skiff made by his hands. And when the land is green, he travels through odorous roads, the still form lying in sweet smelling straw in the great slow moving wain.

Now the overflow is upon us. There is peace and beauty in Rose Hamlet, for, many a mile of land and pasture rolls between its homes and the flood. In the far portions of the Parish the waters have sway, and roll gray and limitless, into horizon. Houses are whelmed up to their chimneys; wan faced children peer into the flood from roof tops; gaunt women stretch forth their hands for bread towards the relief boats coming up from New Orleans. There is desolation upon the land. Dead oxen and heifers drift out on sullen waters.

Here and there, over the dull wide waste, living cattle crouch on swaying driftwood, and half submerged trees. And anon, *it* stares above the flood, the thing that yesterday men called man or woman—and sinks with gurgle back into the deeps. From above and below, a vast sound gathers and deepens; the wail of babe, the low of cattle, the call of fowl, the shriek of the dying, blending into wide, ocean-like moan. A scream! it tears through the flood, jagged, prolonged and shrill. Vulture wheels down in lessening gyrations upon her prey. On the island knoll of elevated ground—where rise tall gum trees—carcass fowl gather in thousands, making fitful caw above the waters; the birds are waiting; there is desolation upon the land—above, the wide joy of May Arcadian heavens.

Slowly, so slowly that motion is scarcely perceptible, yonder boats move on. They are many, a dozen, nay a score; within them, the folk of Rose Hamlet. None remain in the village; there is silence within it. Old and young, the strong and the infirm, even the blind and the palsied, are afloat—one who was their light and their joy is borne forth, and the Arcadian leaves all to follow his love, even unto the end. In the large skiff that leads is Père St. Cyr; he has aged; and the old Gran'mère, who hath peace because our Father holds her to His heart; and one there is,

black robed and motionless as graven image, Pierrot, the Arcadian. They have covered the bier with white blossoms ; the virgin's hair flows among them. From skiff to skiff, from hand to hand, gleam tapers. Lights glimmer, and double and treble in endless repetition on the waters ; they pierce the flood and shine beneath, seemingly increasing always, gliding always onward. The village maidens clad in white bear garlands ; they follow the bier in the second boat, and third and fourth. In the rest are the elders, the old men, the fathers and matrons. The train moves on,—past yonder bend—on to the Mississippi, the twinkling, darkling, fitful lights darting into the river and up again, light flight of stars. In all the *Parishes des Arcadiens* there was none like the dead maid, none so fair, so pure.

*Alas, Babette ! Alas, Pierrot !*

Slowly the boats pass on. They gain yonder bend and curl around it like shining ring, one by one, light after light, scintillating, wavering, appearing, disappearing beneath the scattered oaks that lift above the deeps.

Sunset ripens. The west is oriflamme, and sheds rose light as sweet odor. The joy steals fragrance wise across the flood ; waters bloom. One by one, the boats float on into the radiance. A quiver, a

feeling of transition, a premonition, is in the air. The vast wings of the Spring stir faintly in its passing. On the morrow June sun will rise.

One by one, the boats glide on, away from the inhabited places, away from the great murmur. In the vast silence of waters comes the first cry of katydid and locust. Summer is at hand. Swift twilight is upon us; the west is quenched in sudden dark. There is whirr of multitudinous wings; swallows sweep above us in circles, now widening, now lessening to a point in opposite distance, they will nest in the inland parishes. It is the passing of Spring.

And to a soul by the bier there comes a void and a vision. Still Pierrot looks on the virgin, and through the void of death a bird-like note comes to him, and the spirit overshadows the maiden form, speaking thus unto his spirit:—

*“Beloved, think not our nuptials are undone, we walked on earth with the Beautiful. I dwell now with Beauty; we lived by loving, of love I have my being. Drink of knowledge at the fountains of the Spring, and with eyes made clear to see, and mind to know, thou wilt adore, and be purified through worship to walk with me in paths of thine Inheritance.”*

And the Arcadian grows conscious of his own soul, stands face to face with ego. About him there prevails the clear and tremulous sense of God.

His nameless, sentient, naked Love, of the kinship and nearness of all spirit ; the breath of angels encircles men as atmosphere.

Slowly one by one, the boats move on into the West.

This morning when Durien the Notary, just returned from Grosse Tête, bore to the Olende cottage the license of marriage, the good man whistled his cheeriest tune, so blithe were the flowers of Babette, so blithe the birds of Babette ; not a bloom was faded or drooping, not a song had a single false note ; — within, just in the chamber's centre, there was strange looking sawdust—Gran'mère was never untidy—and two little white shoes. Much the Notary wondered, that the Bridal sabots were forgotten, and wondered again that the Bride had gone so soon to the Hamlet ; not until ten was Sabbath High Mass, and noon was the hour for the wedding. And kind Durien, putting the wee shoes in his pocket,—he has a great heart and would not see the maid disappointed—goes merrily whistling, on through the lanes to the Hamlet. The ground is white as with snowflakes, for beneath the hedges of Cherokee, the *Roses are scattered.*

## CHAPTER XIV.

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### Before the Dawn.

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O! Spirit, art seeking unwearied the Light  
Amidst the great glooms, the shadows of night?  
Heart clothed in Sacrifice findeth the Way;  
For Charity maketh the Beautiful Day.

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And Pierrot St. Eloise is seen no more in the Hamlet. Only Père St. Cyr can tell of his dwelling place, and Mon Père will not speak. When the old folks question him in the village, and the youths and maidens look a mute enquiry, he is wont to shake his snow white head, making answer:—“Dear children do not seek to know. The lad is gone from us; it is for the best. He sorrows with a great sorrow; he could not stay longer in our midst. Remember him in your ‘Ave Marias.’ ” And thus it is; Mon Père will not speak.

There are some who believe the youth to have stolen back into the green depths of his own native Bayou. And some there are who give ear to old Dubois the fisherman, who wandered into the village last nightfall, and reports to have seen a fortnight since — one like our Pierrot, on board a rice trading boat at Donaldsonville. Others again, credit the young Priest Austin, lately sent by the Bishop of Cuba to aid Père St. Cyr, who tells of a certain Arcadian dwelling with a Brotherhood of Mercy in the Antilles; but the monk's name he cannot tell, for the Arcadian speaks it not, only this:—“I am a son of Louisiana, a child of grief and of the Têche.” But all is vague report, intangible rumor.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

Here among our people, the loves of the youth and the maiden are passing into a memory. But on this May Sabbath eve, good Mère Cécile (who saw him first) and two other dames of the Parish of Point Coupée, relate how they beheld in the early morn a stranger clad in black robe glide past them, while gathering drift wood in St. Francis Cemetery. The form sought about until it found a grave apart from the rest in the rear of the Church, where it knelt down, and weeping, laid a garland on the tomb.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

A score of Springs have come and gone. And when the Cherokees whiten the roadsides, with each returning eve of the last Sabbath of Our Lady's month, the sable garbed pilgrim comes silently, and as silently departs. At times the villagers would question him, but there is that upon his face which checks them, and ere the more daring can speak, he is gone. Sometimes he is seen at dawn, sometimes at Vespers. There is always someone to witness his visit; one year Michel the wood-cutter, another, Silvestre the Sexton, and others; and the rose wreath bears witness always.

Will he come again?—Spring stirs once more in the Cherokee hedges—*new Roses bud.*



## CHAPTER XV.

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### Into the Perfect Day.

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The Soul that hath lost all esteemed  
Of God save Beauty's sense, redeemed  
Is by that saving power alway.  
For in this knowledge doth it pay  
Homage unto Good, which is  
The first of all Necessities.

\* \* \* \* \*

A human form glides through the evening. By the sunset red on the Mississippi we see it move slowly towards us as we stand here in the old cemetery. The figure is black and bears a rose wreath. Once more the flood is upon us. It is May, and the last Sabbath eve of the month. The pilgrim's face is turned from us, but his uncertain step disguises not from us a majesty of bearing and of form. A change has passed over him; the consummation is at hand. The fading vital force concentrates in the look that gazes past us seeking. He finds the grave apart and lays down the

garland. Now the stranger's features are turned westward to the river ; they have dignity past the dignity of man. An energy, a great sweetness and spirit strength lies upon them.

The water is very near ; it absorbs the evening glory, and flows, a second glory, onward... Young purple wings uprise from the bosom of the West ; it shows a red gash from which drops rain down and crimsons the river. The old Christ-like wound of nature is set in heaven. It is the sign of her woe because of that hate whose name is Sin that killeth Love, and hath bidden Perfect Beauty veil her countenance.

Beyond, to north, and west, and south, the great empurpled flood sweeps outward to horizon. The Churchyard on its high knoll looms above the waters. Light from the west falls on the tombs of the fathers ; they shine out like forms of saints upon Rock of Ages. It falls on the old Church, and its cross that seems like the Master standing amid His elect. It falls clear upon the grave apart and the mourner.

A long unutterable sigh steals among the tombs and out upon the flood. The pilgrim lies prostrate ; his head covering has fallen aside ; it is a cowl. The garb is that of the Miserecordia. He is powerless to move, we stand face to face with—*Pierrot the Arcadian!*

His strength is departing, he will die. No bodily decay is manifest, no ravage of approaching dissolution. There are the fair proportions of perfect manhood, the frame shows no lines of physical agony; and yet, he will die. It is rather the passing of body into Spirit, than their separation, the absorption of the natural life into that of the soul. There is no sign of death's presence in the body, yet this is death. On the monk's countenance is writ that bliss the spirit knoweth when first it passeth into fields of Revelation, the light that shineth upon soul brought face to face with Beauty; from his brow beams the *Love that is Knowledge*.

He is dying; is dying fast.

Of old, the layman who stood before the Holy of Holies met his death of justice. In all ages the heart that looks upon the Lord seeks death of His mercy.

Once more the sigh of the pilgrim is heard on the evening. The dawn of Joy is not yet perfect. Truth's image clears within his soul, but faint intangible shadow lingers—the taint of earthly regret, the *regret for human love*.

The holy soul of soul, the heart of heart, that dominant principle of our being which is prophet, seer and teacher, the *ideal of self* that hath sacred

reality, is transmuting the human of him into itself, is cleansing him of what of earth's alloy remains within him; but the purification is not yet accomplished.

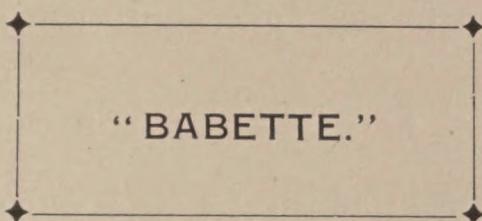
False strength comes to the pilgrim. He turns once more towards the grave; as he does so he is conscious of fresh beauty about him; new lights fall upon the tomb. He raises his head and beholds. A great rainbow beams out between sky and flood; it bends until its fairness touches the grave and is lost therein.

And from the buried virgin's virgin dust comes a voice breathing over his spirit the peace born of perfect sacrifice in hearts. Through his soul it flows like healing oil, bringing calm even as the words of the Blessed One unto Sea of Galilee. He looks upon the Symbol of Promise, and in the look regret falls from him; the consummation is indeed at hand. The monk stands as one transfigured, his arms wide opened towards the west. For the first time his uplifted voice peals sonorously among the sepulchres:—

*“I come, O! Beloved! I come. The way is clear; it is even as thou foretolddest—I follow thee now—through the sunset at last.”*

“And behold the veil of the Temple was rent,” and unto man was revealed the Holy of Holies.

The dead Brother of the Miserecordia lies prone upon the tomb. The slab is gray with years; and thereon one word is written, only this:—



Close to the grave of the maiden grows the Cherokee rose, and in the Springs snows the white blooms thick upon it, with its presence making sweet the air. In language that the clean of soul may understand it speaks this prophecy:—

*"She is not dead but sleepeth."*

And again, through all lands and climes, in the fruitful and desert places, from the Cedars of Lebanon to palm groves in the Indian Sea, from yellow corn fields of the west even to olive woods of the east, from pole to pole, and ocean unto ocean is heard, echoed and reechoed, the gospel of all Spring:—*"She is not dead, but sleepeth."*

Through human heart it has vibrated in all ages, and until time shall be no more, will vibrate. Through heart of believer and unbeliever, of faithful and faithless; but only unto him who loves much will be given its perfect understanding.

Beauty lives eternal, one with Love, perfect only in its fields beyond the suns. On earth, and through Creation, yawns no grave for Love ; no accident of change or of decay hath power to entomb the Beautiful. At times they lie in seeming death, it is but to rise again with the Ancient One at Dawn.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

In Rose Hamlet, along *La Belle Rivière*, throughout the meadows, and in the common field, all bursts into bud and breaks into song. The splendors of another sunset fold themselves away, glory upon glory along the west, from which floats up a halo, the echo of its fires. Land and stream lie sanctified in chaste gold light. Virgin Arcadia, robed in the Cherokees, clasps white arms about the blue river-lake the holy sapphire symbol of her covenant with Peace, and smiles in answer to her mating doves. Eternal Spring anoints the fields once more. Behold ! in the hedges, *the Roses bloom.*

## AFTERWORD.

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More than half a century Cherokee Rose has opened in the hedges of New Arcadia, and the Springs have come to birth upon its meadows, bringing joy to the inland Parishes, but deepening the doom that broods over the old churchyard of St. Francis. With each returning year the waters of the Mississippi have crept landward, steadily, slowly, surely gaining inch by inch, rood by rood, creeping near, yet nearer, brushing away the great levee as a cobweb from their path, sweeping it away again and again as soon as replaced by the hand of man, until the wise of the nation beholding the powerlessness of human toil, moved the site of the government levee inland, leaving Church and Cemetery to their doom. And it has fallen. Today there is upon the spot a desolation like no other desolation, a holy and awful abandonment, that strong man looks on as he looks on ruined altar, speaking in whispers, and with uncovered brow; a fearful and piteous solitude that woman beholds only through her tears.

And thou, O! Heart of the South, with thy love for old memories, thy deep tenderness for the ashes of the firstborn, the great universal heart of all lands where men reck of thy history beats in sympathy with thy dole.

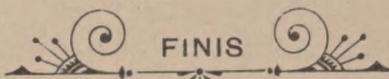
Peace has departed from the tomb. The grave gives up its dead even unto the waters. Thus passes away the most priceless relic, the most venerable landmark of Louisiana. Not a stone of the Church stands upon a stone, and at rest in their graves no longer

“The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.”

Some of the sacred dust of the Pioneers has been removed by the Arcadians and Creoles with the filial love of those sons of the soil, to the Cemetery of New Roads, the Parish county seat. The remains of Julien Poydras now rest in the grounds of the Poydras Academy of that place.

Over the Arcadian parishes have passed the changes of the years. The climate, warm in the days of the early settlers, has grown fresh and mild; and the wild fowl has gone from the waters of La Belle Rivière. But the soil still gives forth its wonderful abundance, and the cane, the cotton, and the corn come to white and gold harvests, the glory of the land. Upon the spot is the Beauty that departeth not.

The tomb of the Arcadian lovers is seen no more by men. Dear Brother, should you pass the place where once it stood—and you may pass it, for again the flood has rolled backward from the land—walk in all reverence as before an “Altar where the Host has left the memory of its sacrifice.” For their life theme is graven, not indeed upon stone which passes away, but on human heart, and on the soul which will endure when the mountains have perished, and the hills are not. Go! read it likewise in the field, thereon are set the Scriptures, there the Lord hath written the Book of Revelations. Go! learn it of the meadow, every bloom and grass blade tells it,—stay, hear me yet,—*the Cherokees have the lesson.*



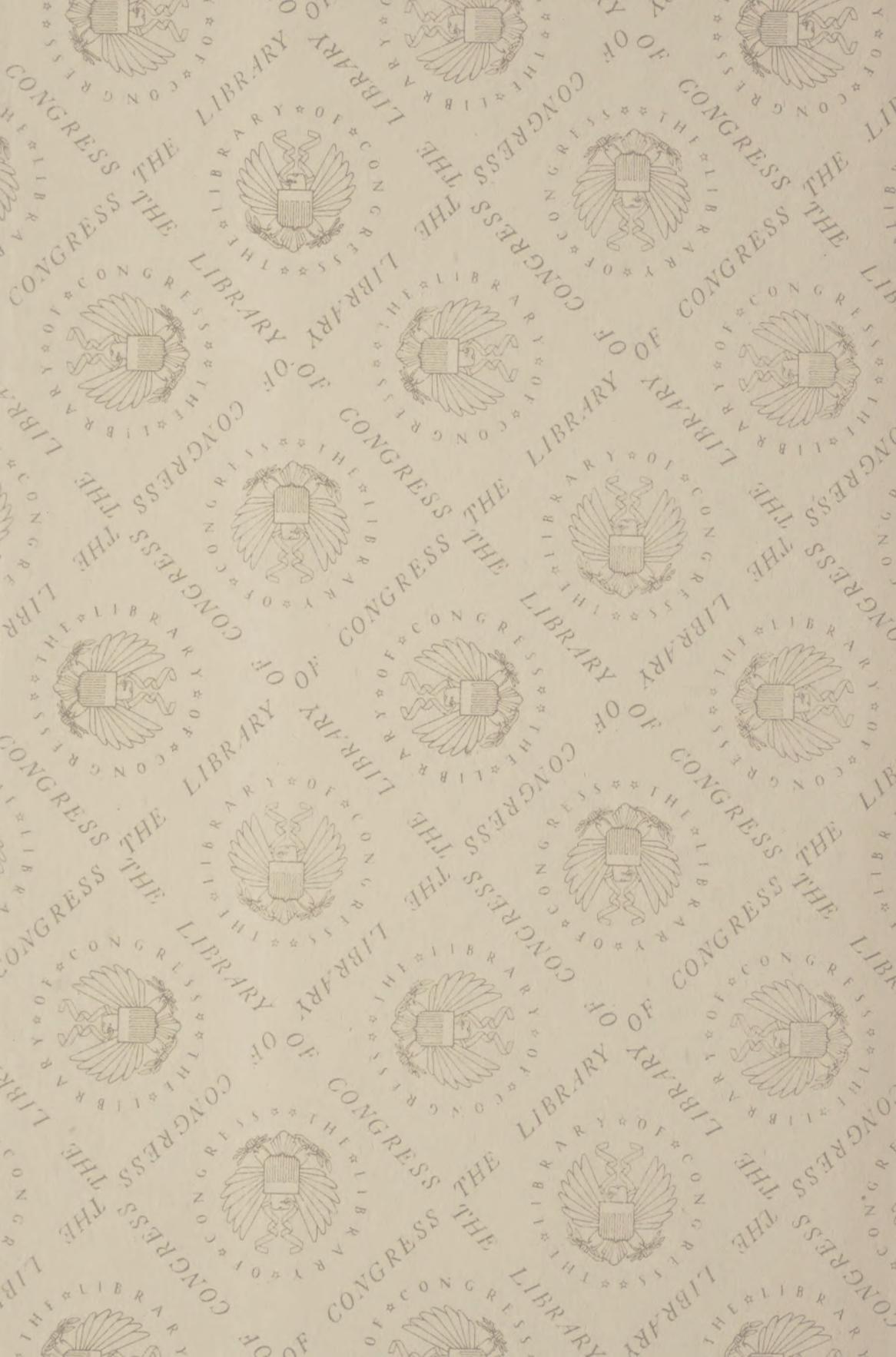
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